

# GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Awards and recognitions by definition are not part of the advancement plan. They supplement it in many ways however, and often lead to increased retention. Some awards and recognitions are for youth, some for adults, and some for both. Some are earned, while others are presented in honor of service rendered. Awards and recognitions can be administered by a council advancement committee or by other committees or task forces as determined by a council executive board. For more information about awards, visit Awards Central at [www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/](http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/). Application and nomination forms are available at [www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/](http://www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/). In most cases, the forms provide details on where to send the paperwork and also list any additional information that might be required. Questions about awards and recognitions should be directed to Member Care at the national service center, 972-580-2489 or [myscouting@scouting.org](mailto:myscouting@scouting.org).

## Unit, District, and Council Recognition

### Journey to Excellence

Journey to Excellence is the BSA's council recognition program designed to extend challenge and to reward success. It measures performance of units, districts, and councils and is a means of encouraging excellence at all levels of the BSA.

#### **JTE Targets Impact at Every Level: Units, Districts, Councils**

Units will strive to deliver programs that develop retention and increase membership, improving training, meetings and activities, advancement rates, outdoor programming, community service, and finances. District initiatives must lead to membership growth, increased retention, fundraising achievement, and a higher level of advancement, camping, and training. District committee strength is, of course, a significant element that is developed through volunteer recruitment, the proper use of nominating committees, strong chartered organization relationships, and further training. Councils must demonstrate financial sustainability; growth in membership and retention; increased advancement, camping, and community service; improved unit service; and strong council leadership and governance.

### JTE Recognition

There are three award patches for achievement in Journey to Excellence, one for each level: Bronze, Silver, or Gold.

**For more information, visit [www.scouting.org/jte/](http://www.scouting.org/jte/).**

## Recognition for Adult Volunteers

### District Award of Merit

#### **Who Can Be Nominated?**

The District Award of Merit is a council award presented by districts just as the Silver Beaver Award is a national recognition presented by councils. It can be presented to any registered adult volunteer who has provided outstanding service at the district level. Professional Scouters and other employees of the Boy Scouts of America at any level may not receive it based on employment service. Those who also serve in volunteer capacities may be eligible, however, based solely on that service. Recipients can only receive the District Award of Merit once. There are no prerequisites for the award.

### How Many Can Be Presented?

The number of awards is allotted annually: one for every 25 traditional units, or fraction thereof, registered as of the annual year-end close of registration. The district need not present its entire allotment. Those not used can be held for years in which a larger number will be presented.

### On What Basis Are Nominations Evaluated?

Consideration shall be given to the nominee's position and the corresponding opportunity to render noteworthy service beyond normal expectations in the district. A generally positive attitude toward the district and council, and efforts in harmony with their operations is vital. Nominations are confidential. To avoid disappointment, nominees are not to be informed of intentions to put their names forward. The nature and value of "noteworthy service to youth" may be widely interpreted. It could consist of a single significant action with extraordinary results, a number of efforts contributing to the lives of many, or it may be results generated over an extended period of time with a relatively small group.

### Recommended Procedures

1. Annually, district chairs each appoint temporary District Award of Merit selection committees of not more than five persons. They may or may not be advancement committee members. They must however, be Award of Merit or Silver Beaver recipients. District executives serve as staff advisers. Standing selection committees with the same members from year to year are discouraged. However rotating members after a given terms of service may meet the need of providing the different perspectives desirable to the process. The selection committees consider their nominations and make recommendations to the Scout executive.

2. The Scout executive implements an approval process according to local council practices, and informs district chairs of the nominees to receive the award.
3. Submit nominations on the Nomination for the District Award of Merit form, No. 33720, which is available at [www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/](http://www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/).
4. Awards of merit should be presented at district or council annual banquets, or other special events. Spouses should be in attendance and district or council officers should explain the award and its significance. Eagle Scouts or Summit Award Venturers might serve as escorts, and appropriate citations explaining the noteworthy service should be read for each recipient.
5. Group and individual pictures should be taken, distributed to recipients and their families, and also used with press releases for local for newspapers and other media.

## Silver Beaver Award

### Who Can Be Nominated?

The Silver Beaver Award is bestowed by the National Court of Honor and presented for noteworthy service of exceptional character by councils to registered adult volunteers within the territory under the jurisdiction of a local council. Nominations will not be considered for current or former professional Scouters until five years after leaving employment with the BSA. Other council employees are eligible to receive the award based solely on their volunteer service. The award may not be presented posthumously. There are no specific prerequisites such as the District Award of Merit, for the Silver Beaver.

## How Many Can Be Presented?

Each council's allotment is based on the number of its traditional units registered as of the annual close of membership at the end of the year preceding submission of nominations. Councils with 60 or fewer traditional units at that time are entitled to one Silver Beaver nomination. Councils with more than 60 units are entitled to one nomination for every 60 traditional units or fraction thereof. A council not awarding its full allotment in any one year may accumulate the unused portion for future presentation. In extraordinary cases, volunteers in units located outside the United States served directly by the National Council, may also be recommended through the International Department.

## On What Basis Are Nominations Evaluated?

Silver Beaver Award nominations are evaluated in the same way as the District Award of Merit, except the results of services rendered should be felt at the council level.

## Recommended Procedures

1. Annually, the council president appoints a temporary Silver Beaver Selection Committee. Its members should be Silver Beaver recipients and may or may not be on the advancement committee. The Scout executive or designee serves as staff adviser. Standing committees with the same members from year to year are discouraged. However, rotating members after given terms of service may meet the need of providing the different perspectives desirable.
2. The council will establish a deadline for submission of nomination forms. The Silver Beaver Award Nomination Form, No. 512-103, is available at [www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/](http://www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/).
3. As of January 1, 2012, councils process their own Silver Beaver awards and order support materials directly from the Supply Group. Following the selection, councils must send a report to the National Court of

Honor with the names, presentation dates, and council name to the National Court of Honor for the national historical record.

4. Plan for the presentation of the award(s) at the council annual recognition banquet or other pinnacle event, as reflects their status as the highest honor a council can bestow.

## Silver Antelope Award

As with the Silver Beaver, the Silver Antelope is presented for noteworthy service of exceptional character to leaders within a territory. The Silver Antelope Award Nomination Form, No. 512-105, is available at [www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/](http://www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/). (No other nomination forms are accepted.) Nominations must be submitted electronically to the National Council no later than November 30 for recognition the following year.

## Silver Buffalo Award

The highest honor presented by the BSA is the Silver Buffalo Award. It is typically presented at the National Annual Meeting on the basis of noteworthy service to youth that is of a national or international character. The service may directly benefit the BSA or it may be independent of our organization. The Silver Buffalo Award Nomination Form, No. 512-102, is available at [www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/](http://www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms/). Nominations must be submitted electronically to the National Council no later than August 31 for recognition the following year.

## Distinguished Eagle Scout Award

The Distinguished Eagle Scout Award is presented by the National Eagle Scout Association to those who have been Eagle Scouts for at least 25 years, have distinguished themselves in their work, and voluntarily shared their talents in the communities or towns, or the world around them. Service to Scouting is not necessarily an important criterion in determining worthiness. Only truly distinguished individuals—those receiving extraordinary recognition, fame, or eminence—should be

nominated. No posthumous nominations will be accepted. Selection of recipients is made by the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award Committee of the National Eagle Scout Association board of directors. Use only the Nomination for the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award electronic form, No. 522-300, which is available at [www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/distinguished-eagle/](http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/distinguished-eagle/).

Presentation of the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award may be made, as appropriate, at a career or community-centered event. It may take place at a fundraiser or Scouting function but should not be overshadowed by the presentation of other awards, such as the Silver Beaver. Current holders of the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award should participate in the ceremonies.

## Unit Leader Award of Merit

Quality unit leadership is one of the strongest contributors to youth member retention. Statistics show if young people are engaged in Scouting for at least five years, the BSA's influence will likely stay with them for the rest of their lives. The Unit Leader Award of Merit recognizes those unit leaders with the training, dedication, and organizational skills to provide excellence in programming and retention. It replaces the Scoutmaster, and Venturing Crew Advisor award of merit programs. The requirements have been revised and all top unit leaders are now eligible. There is no relationship between the old Scoutmaster Award of Merit and the Unit Leader Award of Merit.

### Requirements

Nominees must be currently registered as a Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, Advisors, or Skippers and have served in that position for at least 18 continuous months. They must be fully trained according to their positions and meet various requirements as put forth on the Unit Leader Award of Merit nomination form, No. 512-003, which is available at [www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/unit-leader/](http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/unit-leader/). These include

program and succession planning, effective use of the advancement program, positive relationships with the chartered partner, and a positive image of Scouting in the community.

### Nomination Procedure

The unit committee chair completes the nomination form, and for troops, crews, and ships, endorsement from the senior patrol leader, president, or boatswain must be included. The unit or district commissioner certifies that the form is complete, and the Scout executive and council commissioner or president approves it. The council processes the award. National approval is not required. The award consists of a certificate, a square knot with the appropriate device, and special gold bordered position emblem with a gold star.

## The ¡Scouting ... Vale la Pena! Service Award

The ¡Scouting ... Vale la Pena! Service Award recognizes the outstanding services of adults or organizations for involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting for Hispanic or Latino youth. Local councils nominate recipients using the ¡Scouting ... Vale la Pena! Service Award form, No. 521-193, which is available at [www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/scouting-valela-pena/](http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/scouting-valela-pena/). People at any level of the organization and of any race may qualify. Each council may present awards up to the number of its districts. Nominations may be made by a ¡Scouting ... Vale la Pena! Committee, advancement committee, or another designated body. At least one person familiar with service to Hispanic/Latino families should be involved. The Scout executive or designee serves as staff adviser.

Award forms are submitted to the Program Impact Department. Sixty days must be allowed for review. A highly visible event should be selected for award presentation, and agencies such as National Council of La Raza, or U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce should be involved.

## Awards for Outstanding Service Benefitting Special Needs Members

### Woods Services Award

This award recognizes volunteers who have performed exceptional service and leadership in Scouting with disabilities. Nomination forms are sent annually to councils every September with a December 31 deadline. The Council Nomination Form, No. 512-218, is available at [www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/woods-services/](http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/woods-services/). Awardees wear the Community Organization knot, No. 613864 with Special Needs Device, No. 641462.

### Torch of Gold Award

The Torch of Gold Award certificate, No. 33733, which is awarded at the council level, provides recognition to individuals who have provided, exceptional service to Scouting youth with disabilities over an extended period of time.

## Awards Recognizing either Youth or Adults

### Lifesaving and Meritorious Action Awards

The motto “Be Prepared” is practiced daily by millions of current and former Scouts and Scouters. They prepare for the weather, for emergencies, for getting good jobs, and for meeting the challenges of old age. They prepare for life, for saving life, and for committing acts of bravery and exceptional character in the service of others. Every year, approximately 350 registered youth and leaders make their mark in this way. We often call them heroes, but most of the time, when we do, they argue that it wasn’t heroism. They just did what they knew they were supposed to do. They just did what they learned from Scouting.

Three levels of recognition are provided, depending on situations encountered and action

taken: (1) saving, or attempting to save life where an element of risk is involved, (2) an outstanding act of service of exceptional character, and (3) a significant act of service deserving formal local council recognition. Recipients must have been registered youth or adult members at the time of the service. The Lifesaving and Meritorious Action Award form is available from your local council. Once completed, nominations higher than local council certificate of merit are sent to the National Court of Honor, which has sole discretion as to which awards, if any, are presented. There is no appeal system—the National Court of Honor decision is final.

Note that recognition is not given where it appears the act and risk involved was merely in the performance of duty, or in the meeting of an obligation because of responsibility to supervise or give leadership to those whose lives were saved.

### Lifesaving Awards

To earn this level, evidence must show the candidate saved or attempted to save human life under circumstances that indicate heroism and risk to self. The court gives consideration to resourcefulness and demonstrated skill in rescue methods. Depending on the level of risk, three awards are available:

#### Honor Medal With Crossed Palms

Awarded in exceptional cases where both unusual heroism and extraordinary resourcefulness or skill is demonstrated in saving or attempting to save life at extreme risk to self

#### Honor Medal

Unusual heroism demonstrated in saving or attempting to save life at considerable risk to self

#### Meritorious Action Awards

This level recognizes significant or outstanding act of service of exceptional character that need not involve attempts of rescue, or risk to self, but must put into practice Scouting skills or ideals. Depending on the action two Meritorious Action

Awards are available:

### **Medal of Merit**

Awarded for acts of service of a rare or exceptional character reflecting an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others

### **National Certificate of Merit**

For significant acts of service deserving special national recognition

### **Procedures**

1. The council advancement committee, a subcommittee, or special task force, according local practices, provides proper forms along with guidance on how to collect and submit information.
2. The designated committee investigates cases, interviews principals and witnesses, secures and reviews required statements, and provides a written incident summary. The recommendation form must be fully completed with all required information and attachments included.
3. The committee should convene a meeting within 30 days after receiving a recommendation, and based on the circumstances recommend a specific award.
4. Separate applications are required if more than one member is being recommended for an award that involves one incident.
5. Applications submitted after 12 months from the action must be accompanied by a written explanation of the delay from the Scout executive or designee.
6. At least three members of the committee must sign the recommendation. They must have been involved in the deliberations. The National Court of Honor may contact the members.
7. Once completed, send ALL necessary support materials along with the approved nomination form to the National Court of Honor.

Note that a Local Council Certificate of Merit is available for recognizing acts the council committee does not believe qualify for national recognition. In order to ensure a standard approach, the committee designated for reviewing lifesaving and meritorious action awards should also conduct investigations and process local council certificates. An attractive certificate, No. 606760, is available from the Supply Group.

### **Spirit of the Eagle Award**

The BSA has created the Spirit of the Eagle Award as an honorary posthumous recognition for registered youth members who have lost their lives through illness or accident. The award is bestowed by the National Court of Honor as a final salute and tribute, and becomes part of the celebration of the life of the recipient. It publicly recognizes personal contributions to the mission of Scouting and represents the participation of the BSA in the joy, happiness, and life-fulfilling experiences associated in the youth member's life.

An application is available at [www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/](http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/). The unit committee must complete it within six months of the member's death and submit it to the local council.